

Negro Dowie Says Sun Moves; Earth Is Square

BY WILLIAM T. ELLIS.

Beneath the conventional surface of American life exist many strange religious cults, which link the twentieth century with the dark ages. One of the most curious of these, and noteworthy for its widespread hold upon negroes, is the sect created by a man sometimes called "the Negro Dowie," because he, William S. Crowdy, claims to be Elijah II., and the latter-day prophet of the Almighty. The name given his following is the sweeping and now very modest one of "Church of God and Saints in Christ."

Less formidable and respectful is the designation applied by those outside the sect, who call the Crowdyites "Holy Jumpers," because of their frenzied performances at their meetings, and "Feet Washers," because of their observance of this practice. Instead of being confined to the rural parts of the south, as might be expected, this queer body flourishes chiefly in metropolitan centers, having "tabernacles" in the Jewish nomenclature is followed—in Boston, Washington, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, Jersey City, Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Kansas City, Topeka, Atlanta, Jacksonville, Richmond, Va., Newport News, Bridgeport, Conn., and Newport, R. I.

Geography by Revelation.

As Joseph Smith discovered in establishing Mormonism, present day revelation is a convenient cloak for many teachings and practices. Thus Prophet Crowdy says, with Brother John Jasper, that the "Sun do move," he knows it because the Bible says so and because it has been revealed to him. Similarly he knows that the earth is flat and square. Also that Adam was a black man—"Did you ever see any white earth? God made Adam of earth"—as were the patriarchs and Jews. There is ludicrous fearful and wonderful exegesis of scripture in all of the Crowdyite addresses.

Crowdy and his people are Jews, he declares, for the true Jews are negroes. Therefore they keep the Jewish Sabbath, use the Jewish calendar, observe imitations of Jewish feasts, practice what they believe to be Jewish rites, and decorate themselves in a regalia that is brilliant beyond the Hebrew high priest's robes.

Like Solomon in His Glory.

The procession and feasts of the Crowdyites, with their vivid dress effects, are a strong card in attracting members. Here is a glimpse of the recent "Assembly" in Richmond, given by a Times-Dispatch reporter:

"For weird and dazzling performances, the sessions outclass anything of the kind ever seen here before. Grouped around the preacher on the stage in a semi-circle, 100 men, in evening clothes, almost concealed behind rainbow ribbon streamers, shouted and clapped hands, laughing frequently. But the main assembly of these Holy Jumpers was the choir, sitting just below the footlights and facing the congregation. There were probably 100 in the body, most of whom were women. They wore crowns, topped off with blood red silk. Choristers in white, with white bows in each member's hair, faced the choir. The leader of the choir cut wide circles in the thick air of the hall, and the dance began. The 100 voices changed quickly from an andante to an allegro, and as the women sang they danced, not, however, moving from the spot on which they stood. Near the end of the row a woman, weighing more than 250 pounds, could be heard above the rest. She required more room, for she swayed to the right, and then to the left, keeping time with the baton that was never still. Dancing by her side was a small negro boy, who screamed in falsetto tones, and from whose face streams of perspiration poured as he worked as madly to keep in line with his heavy-weight partner. Several times he dropped out of step, and once he changed from the scheduled performance and ran to the verge of an old-fashioned country 'break-down'."

The comment of the Weekly Prophet upon the "Assembly" reminds one of Dowie's reports of his famous New York visit. It says "The historic city of Richmond, the hotbed of the Baptists, has received a blow that was so terrific that they can never recover from it."

The Prophet and the Shekels.

With delicious frankness this sect emphasizes the money side. The prophet does not hesitate to lift up his voice for cash—or did, when he had a voice. His organ, "The Weekly Prophet," outdoes Dowie's best efforts in, first, its laudation of the prophet, and secondly, in its appeals for the tithes. Under the caption "Special Notices from the Man of God," there are in one issue six notices of this sort:

"Dear Brethren: You are hereby notified to send in half of all tithes and also half of all free-will offerings to the Prophet of God at his address, 113 U street, Northwest Washington, D. C., once every two months. Please do this at once. Mal. 3:8. Peace be unto thee. Done by order of the Prophet of God, William S. Crowdy."

Every body must pay a tenth of his income. Still another column on the first page of this particular issue of the organ is designated "Our Rates from the Prophet." It tells the tax that every individual and enterprise connected with the church must forward of the prophet. Secretaries are required to furnish reports to the paper, and then to pay for having them published. In this respect "The Weekly Prophet" has reached a goal often coveted by despairing editors. Contributors have to furnish hard cash for having their "pieces" appear, and there is a fixed rate for the publication of photographs—\$2 for three months' successive publication, which is surely cheap enough.

Here is an "important notice" from the late issue of "The Weekly Prophet": "Unto the Elders of the Church of God and Saints of Christ everywhere. I now write unto thee to send the money for the Minutes as ye all vowed to do at the Assembly. I want ye all to send it in by the 5th of Elul and not later than the 10th. Done by order of 'Chief Evangelist Joseph W. Crowdy, 'Chairman of Presbytery Board.'"

Imitation of Dowie sticks out all over Crowdyism. A master stroke of the latter's, for illustration, was the establishment of business enterprises by the faithful in the name of the church. Thus I find a record of "Church of God Cash Grocery Stores," in Washington, Boston, Richmond, Philadelphia, Newark and several other cities. There are also "The Church of God Shaving Parlors," "The Daughters of Jerusalem Noah's Ark Store," "The Church of God Cafe," "The Church of God Express Wagon," etc.

A Paralyzed Prophet.

At present the dusky prophet is not issuing any proclamations as former-

ly, although frequent communications appear in his name. The reason is probably not known to all the faithful. But this faith-healing Elijah, who claims powers over heaven and earth, was run out of Philadelphia by the authorities because he harbored a nest of smallpox which he was treating by faith, is at present speechless and helpless from paralysis. I discovered this when I called at the little house at 113 U street, Washington, which is the home of these high-sounding dignitaries and officers. There were three or four pickaninnies in evidence. The front door of the house contains, along with some cheap parlor furniture, a roll-top desk and a safe. There were a few books, especially a big ledger, but not a Bible was to be seen.

One of the young women told me that I could not understand the prophet when I met him. Why? "People say he is paralyzed."

"What do you say?" "For my part I believe the scriptures. You know the Bible says a prophet shall be dumb. Zacharias was dumb. Christ was dumb. I could not recall the exact passage, I confessed humbly.

"Why, you know the Bible says he

one of the sisters; is it an ecclesiastical office, or is it merely a subtle compliment to a personality?"

Evidently the prophet's strong right bower is "The Daughters of Jerusalem and the Sisters of Mercy." They are more in evidence than the men. "The Soliciting Sisters" are an important channel of revenue. Most of the notices concern the female "saints."

Thus one news item reads: "Saint Sophie Brown, who has been absent from Zion from several months, has returned to Zion from Jerusalem, and the saints are welcoming her with much joy." Which, being interpreted, means that Sophie Brown has removed the light of her countenance from some Washington kitchen, and has, temporarily at least, solved the servant problem for some Philadelphia household. For "Zion," you know, is none other than Philadelphia, and Jerusalem is, as one paragraph naively remarks, "better known as Washington, D. C."

I haven't studied my Crowdyite geography thoroughly, but I know that Plainfield, N. J., is Gilgal. I hope the designations of Chicago and New York are sufficiently exact to make amends for some of the names which the white Dowie applied to these cities. Much is made of the race question



William S. Crowdy, the colored Elijah.

was dumb and opened not his mouth."

There was no answering this scriptural interpretation—although I have heard more pretentious authorities than an unlettered negro cloak equally absurd propositions under the vague statement: "The scripture says." I pressed the point of seeing the prophet; the chance to meet the latest revealer of hidden things was not to be allowed to pass easily. In a few minutes he came tottering in, borne by two young women and supporting himself by the wall. His left eye is protruding and staring; his features show the genial vacuity of an ordinary plantation negro. A mumbly sound came from between his lips. It was as the young woman said: The prophet could not be understood. Nor could those nearest him interpret for me. The prophet will no more fulminate against the faithless and unbelieving. His nephew, John W. Crowdy of Philadelphia is now the real power in the church.

Promiscuous Osculation.

All the saluting with the holy kiss that goes on among the Crowdyites is bound to make trouble. The prophet himself was divorced from his wife a couple of years ago. Serious charges have repeatedly been made against the morals of the sect, and Crowdy's utterances were alternately exhortations to love one another and to quit their too-loose living.

"Let brotherly love continue from one to the other; and I want you to send in all the tenth part of the tithes, and I will come to see you when I can. Now, sisters, be good to the brothers, and brothers, be good to you."

Again, in exact reproduction of the text: "Hear to the general order hereafter no one can grovel against the prophet, what is good for one is good for all. All brothers and sisters in the Church of God and Saints of Christ must get their first wives and husbands at once or get their consent to go in writing. You must have a certificate to show that you are clear. I don't care if you have got children (forty) years old, you must go back and get them first wives and husbands in eight days from the time that you receive Epistle or eleven days at the longest."

The husbands and wives must be together or lose within thirty days now if you all are good children and want to go to heaven, you will do what I say. Now may the first love cleave unto you says Jesus Christ the righteous this includes Evangelists Elders and everybody. Jude 24, 25."

A White Bishop of a Black Church.

Among Crowdyites high-fown titles are as thick as flies in a "Church of God Cash Grocery." That the prophet himself is Elijah and also king and high priest, etc., is quite plain. Young "Joe" Crowdy, who is now the real boss of the enterprise, is a prince, as well as chief evangelist. But just how many "Grandfather Abrahams" there are, and their relationship to United States Grandmother Sarah I cannot fathom. Whether "the United States" exhorting elder is a great man or a small man I cannot tell. And I am at a loss as to what Crowdy meant by the title "Chief Singer of the World," which he conferred upon

AN EVERY-DAY DINNER.

BY CORNELIA C. BEDFORD.

Stock Soup with Sago.
Beef à la Mode. Potatoes Française.
Creamed Cauliflower.
Lettuce and Tomato Salad.
Wafers. Cheese.
Peach and Marshmallow Mousse.
Coffee.

A meal as simple as the one here outlined is quite within the scope of the housewife, even if her knowledge of cookery is not great. Fully half of the meal can be prepared hours in advance, so that the necessary details just before the meal may not become too burdensome. Let us go through the details of each dish, then plan how to fit them together.

In planning to keep soup stock on hand it is necessary to keep a careful eye on the left-overs from each meal and utilize every scrap. Good meat, when not otherwise needed, pieces from waste chops, etc., should be cut in small pieces or, better yet, be put through the food chopper that it may yield the richer return. Bones from fresh or cooked meats should all be saved, and at this season odds and ends keep well for a number of days. When a mixed stock is to be made all kinds of meat may be used, indiscriminately, the long cooking blending their flavors together; the one point to be noted is that such high-flavored meats as ham or bacon should not predominate. Bits of raw meat are very desirable and add greatly to the finished result. To each pound of meat and bone (not over one-quarter of the latter) add one quart of cold water and a teaspoonful of salt, heat slowly and boil very gently for at least three hours. Add one or two onions, stuck with six cloves, a small bay leaf, a dozen peppercorns, a stalk of parsley, one or two stalks of celery and such cooked vegetables as are on hand and will harmonize with the general flavor, such as carrots, celery, a little parsnip or turnip; such green vegetables as peas or string beans and always in order. Let all simmer for another hour, then strain through a wet piece of cheesecloth and set away over night; in the morning the fat is taken off carefully and the stock is quite ready for use. For this meal we put on an hour before dinner one pint of stock and two tablespoonfuls of sago and cook very gently until the sago is clear; another pint or more of stock is then added, and when again at the boiling point any needed seasoning may be added and it is ready to be served. This, of course, is not a clear soup, but it is of good flavor and nutritious. Rice, farina or the small pastes, such as vermicelli or taganok, may be used in place of sago.

Select a piece of beef from the round or rump, five pounds is none too much, as it is delightful cold; have it as "chunky" in shape as possible. With the sharpening ste. or a narrow-bladed knife make holes on all sides. Mix together a teaspoonful of salt, a half teaspoonful of pepper, a quarter of a teaspoonful each of ground cloves and allspice. Cut fat leaving pork in slices, then in narrow strips; roll each piece in the mixed spice, then push it down in one of the holes made in the meat. Use at least twenty of these lardons. Take a strip of muslin as wide as the meat is thick through and bind tightly round it. Brown both sides quickly and well in a little hot fat, then place the meat in a deep kettle, pour round it two or three cupsful of boiling water, add a bouquet of herbs, a small carrot and an onion, cover closely and simmer forty minutes to the pound. When done unwind the meat and arrange on a platter, thicken and season the gravy.

Peel potatoes of even, medium size and boil in salted water until done. Drain and let stand for a moment to dry off, then pour gradually over them a little melted butter, tossing that they may be well moistened. When in the serving dish sprinkle with two tablespoonfuls of finely chopped parsley.

Trim green leaves from the cauliflower and soak head downward in cold salted water to dislodge insects. Then drain and place, stalk downward in boiling salted water, and boil gently until the stalk is tender. Drain, arrange in a dish and pour over it a sauce made with one tablespoonful of each of butter and flour, cupful of milk and salt and pepper to season.

Peel a few firm tomatoes and cut in quarters or slices. Arrange on blanching lettuce leaves on small plates. Either at the table or just before dinner mix together four tablespoonfuls of olive oil, a half teaspoonful of salt, a quarter of a teaspoonful of pepper. Dry slowly into this, while stirring vigorously, one tablespoonful of vinegar. Continue stirring until the mixture is very slightly thickened, then sprinkle it over the salad. With this pass cheese and plain wafers.

Press four fresh peaches or eight canned halves free from syrup through a sieve. Cut eighteen marshmallows in tiny bits. Soak a tablespoonful of powdered sugar to one cupful of rich cream. When the mixture begins to thicken add the peach pulp and cut marshmallows, then whip steadily until the mixture is a light froth through and through. Turn out into a mold with a tightly fitting cover, bind the edge with a strip of muslin dipped in melted lard and bury in ice and salt for three or four hours.

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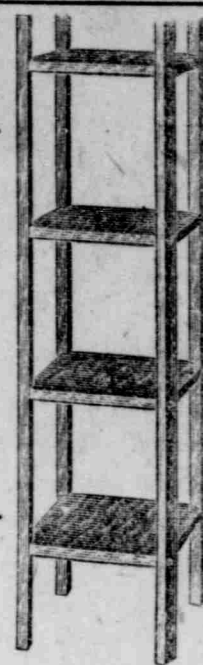
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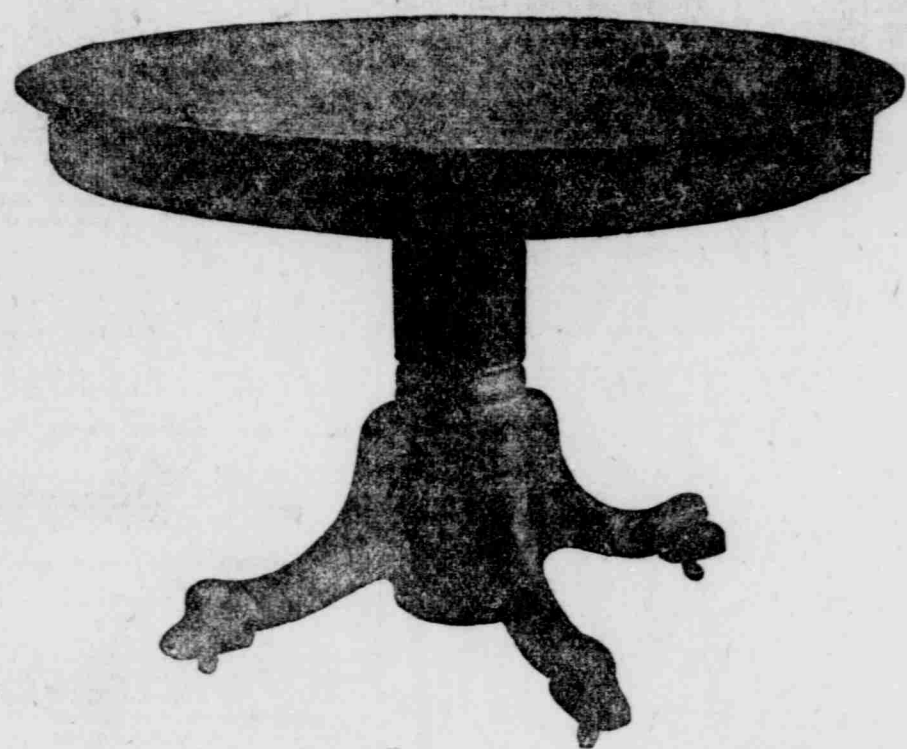
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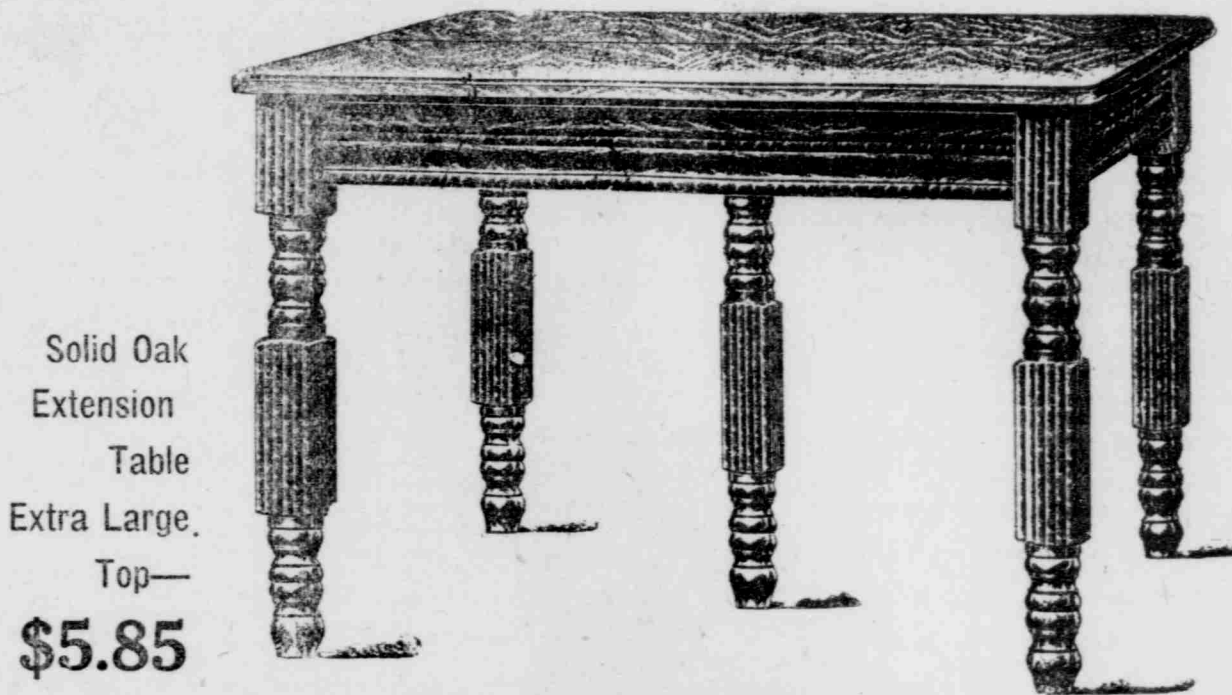
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